

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 3390

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR , SCUL, CZ

SUBJECT: CULTURAL/SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES

REFS A. PRAGUE 3374, B. STATE 28601; C. PRAGUE 3346

1. SUMMARY: AS DEPARTMENT GIVES DRAFT OF EXCHANGES AGREEMENT POSSIBLY FINAL STUDY (REFTELS), IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO HAVE EMBASSY VIEWS ON THE AGREEMENT IN CONTEXT OF CURRENT US-GOC BILATERAL RELATIONS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE AGREEMENT, TAKEN IN AN OVERALL CONTEXT, IS AS GOOD AS CAN BE OBTAINED WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA--THUS OUR RECOMMENDATION FOR ITS APPROVAL. CZECHS HAVE INDICATED THAT FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT DURING DECEMBER 1 SESSION WOULD LIKELY RESULT IN "RECESS" OF NEGOTIATIONS. WE BELIEVE THIS WOULD LEAD, IN TURN, TO NEW DIFFICULTIES IN OUR OVERALL RELATIONS WITH GOC: DAMAGING THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING MY EVENTUAL MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK (WHICH I STILLEXPCT TO TAKE PLACE SOON); ADDING TO EXISTING STRAINS STEMMING FROM FAILURE TO RESOLVE THE GOLD/CLAIMS PROBLEM; UNDERCUTTING OUR PRESENT CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS; AND PERHAPS REVERSING RECENT TREND TOWARD GRADUAL INCREASE IN EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH CZECHOSLOVAK OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY

2. WHILE EXCHANGES AGREEMENT HAS SOME SIGNIFICANCE TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE CONTEXT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, CSCE AND
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POLICY TOWARD EE, WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO

THE GOC THAN IT IS TO THE US. CONSIDERATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE, HOPES THAT THE AGREEMENT MAY PROVIDE SOME HELP FOR THEIR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, AND THEIR DESIRE TO HAVE ANOTHER BILATERAL ACCORD TO CITE AT BELGRADE 1977 COMBINE TO MAKE THIS AGREEMENT ONE THE CZECHOSLOVAKS WANT BADLY TO CONCLUDE.

3. WE DOUBT STRONGLY, HOWEVER, THAT GOC EAGERNESS PROVIDES SUFFICIENT LEVERAGE TO OBTAIN BETTER LANGUAGE ON THE KEY ISSUES OF THE AGREEMENT THAN WE NOW HAVE. CHIEF GOC NEGOTIATOR ZAMLA TOLD ME BEFORE LAST NEGOTIATING SESSION THAT MY LONG-AWAITED CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK HAD BEEN DELAYED IN PART UNTIL EXCHANGES NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDED--I ASSUME TO ENSURE CALL WOULD HAVE UPBEAT TONE OR, IF OUTSTANDING ISSUES COULD NOT BE RESOLVED, I WOULD HAVE TO RAISE THEM WITH CHNOUPEK ON THE "POLITICAL LEVEL." ZEMLA, DURING NOV 19 SESSION, REPEATED THIS. SINCE I KNOW THAT SPACIL, AND PROBABLY CHNOUPEK AS WELL, HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING EXCHANGES TALKS CLOSELY, I HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT TAKING ISSUES TO THEM WOULD RESULT IN ANY CHANGE IN GOC STANCE.

4. IN FACT, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT IF I HAVE TO TAKE ANY UNRESOLVED ISSUES TO CHNOUPEK, IT WILL ONLY HARDEN OVERALL GOC POSITIONS. FOR IF CHNOUPEK GIVES GROUND ON SOME ISSUES, HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY TOUGHEN UP ON LATER INTERPRETATION OF KEY ISSUES IN THE AGREEMENT. HE HAS NOTHING TO GAIN PERSONALLY BY APPEARING "SOFT ON CAPITALISTS." FURTHERMORE, SHOULD I HAVE TO TAKE ISSUES TO CHNOUPEK, I FEEL STRONGLY THAT I SHOULD DO SO ON INSTRUCTIONS TO HOLD FIRMLY TO US POSITION EVEN THOUGH BREAKDOWN IN TALKS MIGHT RESULT. TO GIVE IN WOULD BE SEEN HERE AS BEING CAUGHT IN A BLUFF. AT THIS POINT, SUCH A TURN OF EVENTS WOULD MAKE FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS OVER CLAIMS/GOLD--THE NUMBER ONE US-GOC BILATERAL ISSUE--MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND WOULD GENERALLY STIFFEN CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S STANCE ON A BROAD RANGE OF CURRENT BILATERAL RELATIONS.

5. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, WE BELIEVE THAT AS IT NOW STANDS WE HAVE A GOOD AGREEMENT AND ONE THAT COMPARES FAVORABLY WITH SIMILAR ACCORDS CONCLUDED RECENTLY WITH OTHER EE STATES. WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MOVING GOC MUCH FARTHER THAN WE HAD EARLIER THOUGHT POSSIBLE TOWARD OUR POSITION ON "INDIVIDUALS,"
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THE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM, "CULTURAL CENTERS," AND EXCHANGE OF "PUBLISHED MATERIALS." IN PRACTICAL TERMS WE DOUBT THAT GOC BEHAVIOR IN THESE AREAS WOULD BE ANY DIFFERENT IF WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO GET IT TO ACCEPT THE MOST PIOUS LANGUAGE FROM THE FINAL ACT; TIGHT CONTROLS WILL REMAIN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SYSTEM IN SPITE OF ANY INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS. THE LANGUAGE WE NOW HAVE DOES, HOWEVER,

GIVE US A FIRM BASE FROM WHICH TO PUSH FOR PROGRESS
ON THE CULTURE AND INFORMATION FRONTS DURING NEGOTIATIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS.

6. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THAT, ALTHOUGH NOT PERFECT, THE LANGUAGE OF THE CURRENT DRAFT IS AS GOOD AS WE CAN PRACTICALLY EXPECT TO OBTAIN. TO PRESS FOR MORE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY LEAD TO A LONG IMPASSE ON SCIENTIFIC/CULTURAL MATTERS AND QUITE POSSIBLY TO A RETREAT FROM SOME OF THE LIMITED PROGRESS RECENTLY MADE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS (E.G., ABOLITION OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, MOVEMENT ON DIVIDED FAMILIES, SLIGHTLY INCREASED CONTACTS WITH CULTURAL CIRCLES), AND EVEN PERHAPS TO SOME DEMONSTRATION OF GOC DISAPPOINTMENT (E.G., CAUSING MORE DIFFICULTIES IN FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEC 8-10 CONCERTS HERE OF LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC). WE COULD, OF COURSE, LIE WITH ALL THIS, BUT THINK THAT IS TO THE LONG-TERM ADVANTAGE OF THE US TO GO AHEAD AND CONCLUDE THE AGREEMENT WITH THE CURRENT LANGUAGE.

7. AS THIS MESSAGE WAS BEING PREPARED NOVEMBER 24, MFA SIXTH DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR ZANTOVSKY TELEPHONED EMBASSY TO INFORM US THAT PREPARATIONS WERE UNDER WAY FOR MY CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK, BUT THAT MFA THOUGHT IT BEST TO HOLD DATE OF CALL IN ABEYANCE UNTIL AFTER THE DECEMBER 1 NEGOTIATING SESSION ON EXCHANGES AGREEMENT. MFA, HE SAID, HOPED EMBASSY WOULD RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS PERMITTING A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO TALKS ON DECEMBER 1, THUS PAVING THE WAY FOR AN EARLY POSITIVE MEETING WITH CHNOUPEK. COMMENT: ZANTOVSKY'S
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REMARKS MAKE VERY CLEAR THAT CZECHOSLOVAKS REGARD OUTCOME OF THE DECEMBER 1 TALKS AS A BAROMETER OF WHICH WAY OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE TO MOVE IN THE NEAR TERM.
BYRNE

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